WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Amendment in coal Mines Act, 1973

1199. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 has been amended to allow private Indian Companies to mine coal and lignite for captive consumption and sale;

(b) if so, what are the targets for production of both in public and private sector for the year 1997-98; and

(c) the target achieved during the period April to September, 1997?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) After the Coal mines (Nationlisation) Act, 1973 was amended in 1976 and 1993 the companies engaged in iron and steel production, power generation and such other and uses as notified by the Central Government from time to time are allowed to do captive coal mining. Under the powers conferred by this amendment, a gazette notification was issued on 15.3.96 to allow production of cement as an end use for captive mining of coal. The above amendments to the Act as well as the gazette notification of 15.3.96 apply to both the public sector and private sector.

No amendment has been made in the above Act to allow sale of coal to parties other than captive consumers.

(b) and (c) The captive coal mining companies fix their own production target to meet their needs. Production from the captive coal mines in the financial year 1997-98, which includes the period from April 1997 to September 1997 was 7.53 million tonnes.

Vigilance cases against the Director of Northern Coal Field Ltd.

1200. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Director (Personnel) Northern Coal Field Limited is involved in various vigilance cases for which CVC has imposed/recommended major penalty;

(b) whether such officers who are found involved in such vigilance cases can't be allowed to work on such an important and sensitive seat according to Government norms; and

(c) if so, the reasons for allowing such an officer to continue on a important seat and action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) to (c) Disciplinary proceedings have been initiated against the officer by Government. A final view in the matter can be taken only after completion of the proceedings.

Coal reserves

1201. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Coal reserves in India are estimated to be over 200 billion tonnes; and

(b) if so, the reasons that Government are not exploiting this resource by liberalising its policies to encourage foreign investment and private participation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Yes Sir. As per assessment of Geological Survey of India (GSI) on 1.1.98 the coal reserves up to a depth of 1200 metres in the country are over 206 billion tonnes.

(b) By an amendment in the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 mining